



Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5560th meeting

Tuesday, 31 October 2006, 11:35 a.m.
New York

<i>President</i>	Mr. Oshima	(Japan)
<i>Members</i>	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	China	Mr. Li Keixiang
	Congo	Mr. Biabangoh Ibomo
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Ghana	Mr. Christian
	Greece	Mrs. Papadopoulou
	Peru	Mr. Chavier
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Qatani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Leplinskiy
	Slovakia	Mr. Miynár
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj
	United States of America	Mr. Breusnick

Agenda

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara
(S/2006/817)

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The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2006/817)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/817, containing the report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2006/850, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, China, Congo, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America.

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1720 (2006).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Brencick (United States of America): The United States has voted in favour of this resolution, but with the understanding that all parties will use the next six months to aggressively negotiate a mutually acceptable solution that brings peace, stability and

economic prosperity to the region in a manner consistent with the principle of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

The United States remains concerned that the Western Sahara conflict has impeded regional integration and development for the past 30 years. A lasting resolution is long overdue. Unresolved, this humanitarian crisis leaves the Saharawi people with a bleak and uncertain future. Further deterioration has the potential to worsen their hardship and could threaten political and economic progress in Algeria and Morocco as well.

While we cannot impose a solution, we can call on all parties to engage: the United Nations and each other in a spirit of flexibility and compromise. In particular, we urge Morocco to move quickly to fulfil its many promises to submit a comprehensive and credible autonomy proposal for the Western Sahara. We also urge Morocco to engage seriously in discussions with all Saharawi people, including the Polisario. These discussions, without a predetermined agenda, could form the basis for a new, United Nations-led negotiating process.

Our hope is based on the faith that all parties will exert the leadership and willingness necessary to improve their collective future and solve this dispute. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) is not a viable alternative to a permanent solution, and we, therefore, call on Morocco, Algeria and the Polisario to move beyond rhetoric to the serious work needed for the resolution of this conflict. In practical terms, we also call on the Secretary-General to examine the mechanisms and timetable for the dismantlement of MINURSO, should MINURSO continue to prove ineffective in fulfilling its mandate or the concerned parties prove unable to make substantial progress towards a political solution.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (spoke in French): France voted in favour of the additional extension for six months of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The United Nations Secretary-General has underscored the vital role of the presence of MINURSO for the continued ceasefire in Western Sahara.

France would once again state its wish that the next few months should be used profitably to break the impasse. No one can be happy about this impasse, and there is a need to establish a mutually acceptable

political agreement within the United Nations framework.

France has noted with interest the intention of the Kingdom of Morocco, noted in the report of the Secretary-General, to present some proposals over the next few months. This is an encouraging development that, we hope, will make it possible to move forward.

France, once again, would reaffirm its support for the activities of the Secretary-General and the work of his Personal Envoy.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom has voted in favour of the resolution adopted by the Council to renew the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for a further six months. As the resolution was a technical roll-over of the mandate, I would like to set out aspects of the situation that the United Kingdom considers to be important.

Firstly, the United Kingdom thanks the United Nations Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, Mr. van Walsum, for their efforts to find a way forward in this dispute.

The United Kingdom noted references in the report of the Secretary-General about the human rights

situation. The United Kingdom believes we should continue to monitor the protection of human rights in the region, while working to move beyond the current impasse.

MINURSO has continued to play a stabilizing role in the region. However, no United Nations peacekeeping mandate should be regarded as open-ended. After the renewal of MINURSO's mandate in April of this year, we had hoped that there would be steps forward on this issue and that we would not require a purely technical roll-over at this meeting.

I would like to reiterate the United Kingdom's desire to see progress in the next six months, beyond the current impasse.

I would like to underline again the United Kingdom's position that the only solution to this issue has to be mutually acceptable and provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in line with United Nations requirements as set out in previous Security Council resolutions.

The President: The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11:45 a.m.